

# Residents help those in need

■ Hundreds gathered in West Perrine on Saturday to paint homes, plant trees and beautify their neighborhood. The projects were part of Team Metro's P.R.I.D.E. week.

BY JULIE CHAZYN  
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As 94-year-old Ruby Grant watched from the inside, the outside of her West Perrine home was transformed.

On Saturday, an army of volunteers marched up, planted trees in her front yard and painted the exterior walls, as Grant looked on, beaming.

Her house was one of five chosen for beautification as part of Team Metro's P.R.I.D.E. week kickoff, which in this case was dubbed Pride in Perrine.

Neighborhood P.R.I.D.E. week, established in 1999 by Team Metro, aims to bring neighbors together to work on projects that will enhance the community.

Grant, who has been living in her house since 1950, was thrilled with the changes.

"Today is a special day," she said. "I'm just an old widow with a very low income, this kind of thing I wouldn't have been able to do on my own."

The projects, its organizers say, are meant to last longer than the designated week.

"We are providing a focus on community clean-up and maintenance," said Miami-Dade County Commissioner Dennis C. Moss, "but our goal is that this will all roll over into the rest of the year — we want these special projects to have long-lasting effects in these neighborhoods."

In Perrine, the celebration kicked off at R.R. Moton Elementary School with the unveiling of a mural portraying animals in the jungle that was painted by Team Metro staff members and donated to the school.

"Students are able to see that people care about them, care enough to paint a wall for them," said Jimmy Brown, Moton's principal. "Team Metro will also come to the school to talk to our boys and girls to get them interested in

the projects and to get them involved."

The beautification process seems to have already begun to work some magic — at least that's what some Moton students say.

"I love my school and I love helping out," said Moton fifth-grader Rashid Price, who had rolled up his sleeves to work on Moton's butterfly garden, with the new mural nearby.

"If I was president of Perrine and people littered in my street, I would get so mad and beg them not to do it because it's like making your house dirty," he said. "You don't want to do that 'cause you live there."

Ed Hanna, president of the West Perrine Community Development Corporation, said he believes in P.R.I.D.E. Week.

"These projects show the togetherness of people gathering for good," he said. "We need a whole lot of that these days."

Fixing things up can have another long-term effect, said Auonn Jones, a 21-year-old Greater Miami Service Corps volunteer.

"I live in Overtown, and I know that projects like these would make things a whole lot



PHOTOS BY KATHRYN WANLESS / FOR THE HERALD

**MURAL UNVEILED:** Timothy Clark, 8, helped unveil the mural painted at R.R. Moton Elementary School as a part of Team Metro's Community Beautification Program on Saturday.

nicer," Jones said. "Everyone loves nice things. You just want to keep it that way and not destroy it."

Grant's trees, donated by Adopt-A-Tree, are only 3 feet tall. But on Saturday, she was imagining a day when they will bring shade and color to

the brightly painted home.

"All I have now is a little garden, and every day I work on my garden because I just love the flowers," she said. "I can just picture it — a big tree with big green leaves and all my little flowers happy in the shade. Won't that be nice?"



**HELPING OUT:** Ruby Grant, 94, watches as volunteers from the community — Ed Hanna, Kenji Sugimoro, and Daniel Guerra — paint her house.

# Relay raises \$25,000

■ A relay in Pinecrest Friday raised more than \$25,000 in the fight against cancer. All the proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society.

BY YUDY PINEIRO  
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A live band played old-school favorites like Madonna's *Holiday* as the crowd — mostly high school and college-age — danced, mingled and munched on grub.

But this was not a party. The Palmetto Bay/Pinecrest Relay for Life was, however, a celebration — of life.

The relay was held at Palmetto High School on Friday and raised more than \$25,000 for American Cancer Society research and programs.

Uniting most who attended was a past smeared with the pain caused by cancer — friends or family members who lost lives to the disease, and those who have survived their battle. The day was not about dwelling on the past, but rather about appreciating life.

Tina Robles, 22, is a nearly two-year survivor of Hodgkin's lymphoma.

"It kind of shows me that people care what I went through," said Robles, a junior at the University of Miami. "It's a feeling of camaraderie, in a weird way."

Four hours after the festivities kick-off at 6 p.m., the lights were shut down and the crowd hushed as volunteers lit candles stuffed inside bags placed across the field to spell "Hope" and "Cure."

Each bag — sold for a donation — carried the name of a cancer survivor or someone who died of cancer.

In the relay, there were 25 teams of up to 15 members who took turns walking and jogging around the illuminated track until about 8 a.m.

Each member donated at least \$100.

Teams pitched tents around the track and sold pizza, burgers and water as a fundraiser.

"It was very successful," said event chairwoman Rebecca Forman, an eight-year breast cancer survivor. "Everyone there had a very good time."